

Series: Psalms
Title: A Wilderness Worthwhile
Text: Ps 63:1-3
Date: May 12, 2020
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Psalm 63: 1: « A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. »

David was pursued by his son, Absalom so here he is again in the wilderness. So many of David's Psalms came when he was alone in the wilderness. The wilderness was the place where God was pleased to renew in David a right spirit after Christ alone

We find many cases where God leads his child into the wilderness alone, where God reveals himself. God made himself known to Hagar in the wilderness (Ge 16:13-14). Moses was on the backside of the desert when God appeared in the burning bush (Ex 3:1-4). Elijah went a *day's journey into the wilderness* where God made himself known (1 Ki 19:4-18). We see a type of the church, "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev 12: 6). The church is the type we see in Gomer. She was praising her lovers, "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her" (Hos 2:14).

On one hand, as God's saints whose citizenship is in heaven, we are always in the wilderness as strangers in this world. But the wilderness is also a good type of the various trials God brings us into. With our present conditions due to the virus every member of this church is literally in the wilderness right now. Others are entering trials that will be a wilderness. Still others are right in the middle of the wilderness now

But God brings his child into the wilderness by his sovereign hand on purpose. It is to get us alone with God. The purpose of God is to prune away everything stealing our hearts from Christ. God uses the wilderness to turn us from the sin that so easily besets us. His purpose is to renew in us a right spirit after Christ alone. Through it all God grows us in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, our gospel is not a gospel in theory. It is a gospel God makes his child experience. If we are a child of God, at some point, God shall bring us into the desert wilderness where no water is. All God's children, in Christ, are without sin. But God has no child in this world without chastening. No child of God goes without our Father's loving chastening correction.

Hebrews 12:6: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Gods' pruning is painful. But trials are meant to be painful. I watched my grandfather prune his tomato plants. Sometimes, I thought he was going to kill them. When he finished there would be almost as many branches on the ground as was on the plants. But it did not kill them it made them stronger. Brethren, as a church, every wilderness God has brought us into, God has brought us out of it stronger than when we went into it.

God will not allow the faith of his child to fail in the wilderness but preserves faith in his child, drawing us nearer to God. David cries out, **Ps 63: 1: O God, thou art my God.** It means "*O God, thou art my El—my mighty God.*" God made David worship God in the wilderness. He did not seek comfort in the dry wilderness. David wrote a brand-new desert wilderness Psalm in worship of God.

Only the grace of God can bring us to say this with a true heart of faith—"O God, thou art my God." In order to bring David to make that statement from a pure heart it took God the Father electing him unto salvation by God's free and sovereign grace. It took the Son of God entering covenant to be David's Surety so that he was righteous in Christ by the free and sovereign grace of God. It took God the Holy Spirit regenerating David and creating within him a new man by the free and sovereign grace of God. **AND IT TOOK GOD BRINGING DAVID IN THE WILDERNESS OF TRIAL AND BLESSING HIM BY THE SAME FREE AND SOVEREIGN GRACE.**

Proposition: But if it takes a desert wilderness to strip us of vain things to bring us into closer communion with God then that is "A Wilderness Worthwhile"

Divisions: We see three things God brings his child to do when the Lord brings us into the dry, thirsty wilderness to the end of ourselves: 1) God makes us desire him so that we diligently, earnestly seek him—**Psalm 63: 1...early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee** 2) God reminds us there is no life for us in this wilderness—**Psalm 63: 1:...my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;** 3) God makes us look up to see God's power and Gods' glory—**Psalm 63: 2: To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.**

EARNEST DESIRE, DILIGENT SEEKING

Psalm 63: 1...early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee...

When God brings his child into the wilderness God makes his child earnestly desire him and diligently seek him. This word 'early' means diligently, earnestly, preeminently. It is to seek as merchants seek out precious stones that are of greatest value.

When times are good we can become so lukewarm toward God—and not even know it—usually thinking we are strong. But when the child of God who knows Christ, realizes he needs Christ, then does he begin to long for Christ to seek Christ with all his heart. In the parable, our Lord said, "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?" (Luke 15:8.) The woman knew what she was looking for, so she could not rest until she found it. So it is in grace. Before we can seek, we must know what we have lost. When the child of God senses a loss of communion with our dear Savior then he will not cease to seek *him* diligently.

David speaks of seeking God for what he is in himself, distinct from what he has to give. His gifts are one thing; himself is another. David says, "O God, *thou* art my God: early will I seek *thee*." We love the gift, but we prize the Giver more. Without the Giver, the gift would be worthless. Having him, we have everything; without him, we have nothing.

This desire is intense that God gives. It is an intense desire the Spirit of God gives us, "my *soul thirsteth* for thee, my *flesh longeth* for thee." By "soul and flesh" he means the whole of his being—not his sinful flesh, but his whole being.

The most painful feeling we have is "thirst"; we can go much longer without food than water. But this is a thirst for the Water of Life: for Christ, our Life! For his Presence! His Presence is Life and Peace! When we are wounded spiritually: when we detect Christ's presence withdrawn, he makes us like the wounded deer:

Psalm 42: 1: As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. 2: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? 3: My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where *is* thy God?

He turns our worldly longings into "*longings for him*." If he leaves us to ourselves, we will go longing for things of no profit. But when he is working in us, he makes his child fall on our face longing for his presence.

What makes you give him no thought and fall asleep but then other nights lie awake in the night watches, crying out from your soul, longing for him? He alone does it. Carnal, unregenerate sinners know nothing of this thirst, this longing for Christ. And at times, God's saints do not have it. But when God brings us into the wilderness it is like Christ putting his hand through the door to unlock it. His bride opens and beholds him then he draws away. Doing so, he creates a thirsting and longing to have nearness to him.

A DRY AND THIRSTY LAND

Psalm 63: 1...my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

All of this is brought to pass by God making us behold that we no life in this dry and thirsty land.

Illustration: Dry: the pizza in the oven

One, we have to be reminded this world and all things in it is a dry and thirsty land where no water of life is. We set our hearts on things of this world: our jobs/careers, our loved ones, and the pleasures of this world. But due to sin this world is the veil of tears. God will not let his child forget it.

Sometimes he gives us sickness, loss of loved ones, conviction of sin and other trials and sometime all of these. And just when we are too taken with this world, just when this world looks like an oasis to us, God reminds his child it is a mirage. He reminds us of our fall in Adam and the result

Genesis 3:17: Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.

Ecclesiastes 2: 11: [after that long list of things Solomon did and collected] Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

Brethren, it is a great blessing to remember that God our Savior will allow no thing and no one to steal our affection from him—Christ must have the preeminence!

Two, we have to be reminded our flesh is a dry and thirsty land. There is nothing but drought—dry dust—in our sinful flesh—nothing good in our old sinful nature—we have to be brought low and kept low—to constantly to see our "worminess."

It is in our sinful flesh that we become puffed up in pride and self-righteousness and condemn others and justify ourselves. There is only one who can help and the one cure is that we need constantly to have our hearts broken to see there is nothing good in ME! He brings us into the dust, broken, makes us cry out in truth

Psalm 51: 4: Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest.

He brings us down until we cannot even lift our eyes up to heaven but beat our chest saying, “Lord be merciful to me a sinner!”

Remember why God left Israel in the wilderness? It was to purge them until there was only Joshua and that faithful dog Caleb to enter the promised land. God brings us to behold this world and our flesh as a dry, thirsty wilderness until it is only Christ and you, his faithful dog.

Our dross to consume and our gold to refine

THE POWER AND GLORY OF GOD

Psalm 63: 2: To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

When our great God has humbled his child down in the dust so that we cannot lift up our eyes to heaven, when he has graciously turned us from looking down on others to look down on our own selves then the tender hand of God reaches forth and lifts your heart upward and he makes you behold “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4: 6). And he makes you know it is by Christ, the Power of God that you do so—

2 Corinthians 4: 7: We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

Brethren, that is when you know God is speaking. When he has put you face down in the dust then lifts up your head to behold Christ the Power and Glory of God. That is when you remember what it is all about! Then we “behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14.)—full of grace and truth toward ourselves personally!

He sweetly reminds us of his grace and mercy and love toward us. We did not love him, he loved us. We did nothing to merit his love, we demerited, yet he loved us freely by grace. Christ entered covenant for you and me who hated him

When we “were enemies in our minds by wicked works”, he came forth and reconciled us into friendship with God. When we hated God, Christ loved us. When we were crying down judgment on our enemies, Christ cried down mercy on us. When we were a loathsome, vile, stinking abomination to God, Christ laid down his life for his people. He lived the life, we could not live, obeyed because we could not obey. He bore the sin of common harlots like you and me. He redeemed his elect from the curse of the law by “BEING MADE A CURSE FOR US.”

Then he graciously crossed our path cross with some other wretched sinner who he had saved by his grace. He opened up the scriptures to us. He showed you the wonders of his grace and mercy—showed you what a God he is! Then he reached forth his hand and opened the prison door and said, “Go forth!” and you ran and fell at his feet clinging to him with the arms of faith determined to never let go!

Remember that hour? Remember how it felt one minute to know you are guilty sinner condemned and the next to know you are child of God for whom there is now no condemnation? We were not proud in that moment. We were not self-righteous in that moment. We were not arrogant in that moment. That is why he brings us back into the wilderness and brings us low—then opens our heart all over again to behold him all brand-new. It is to humble us at Christ’s feet!

Brethren, God has a way of making his children mercy lovers! He does this for us and we say, “Lord, what can I do to show my gratitude?” Then he alone speaks effectually and makes us do what only he can make us do. He says,

Colossians 3: 5: Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8: But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9: Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10: And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all. 12: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13: Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye. 14: And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15: And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17: And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

There was one reason David’s faith did not fail in the wilderness; one reason the apostle Peter’s faith did not fail after he denied our Lord and left him; one reason our faith does not fail in the wilderness. It is because even when we deny him, the Power and Glory of God still intercedes for us. Even when we deny Christ, Christ will not deny those he purchased with his

own blood. Has satan desired you that he might sift you as wheat? Christ prays for his redeemed so that our faith fails not in the wilderness.

After our Redeemer was baptized he went into the wilderness where he was tempted of the devil 40 days and nights. But Christ defeated the devil in the wilderness. He defeated him throughout his life. Christ defeated the devil on the cross and in the grave. So our risen Redeemer comes to his child in the wilderness, binds the strongman, and sets us free! I cannot do that work for myself nor any other! But Christ our God brings us into the wilderness to cry,

“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see THY POWER and THY GLORY, so as I have seen thee in sanctuary. 3: Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. 4: Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

AMEN!